



David C.M. Carter

BENTLEY OWNER

IF DAVID C.M. CARTER TAKES PLEASURE IN LUXURIES LIKE HIS CONTINENTAL GT CONVERTIBLE, IT'S BECAUSE HE'S EXPERIENCED BOTH TRIUMPH AND DISASTER UPON LIFE'S ROAD. THAT'S WHAT MAKES HIM SUCH AN OUTSTANDING MENTOR, REFLECTS *CHARLOTTE METCALF*

"I WANT MY CLIENTS TO FEEL THIS IS A PLACE IN WHICH THEY CAN HANG UP THEIR HOLSTER, SWITCH OFF THEIR PHONE AND PUT THEIR FEET UP. IT'S BEAUTIFULLY QUIET HERE, A SERENE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH WE CAN UNLOAD THE JIGSAW PIECES OF THEIR LIFE SO WE CAN START FITTING THEM TOGETHER AGAIN."

Such is the international reputation of David C.M. Carter, that he is known not merely as a mentor but rather as 'The Mentor', signifying his elevated global status in this niche service sector. "I believe the purpose of life is being and becoming the very best version of ourselves," says David, and to this end he mentors high-fliers, helping them break through to the zenith of their game on all levels – personal, spiritual and emotional as well as financial.

David's mentoring is intensive and focused so he never takes on more than 10 clients at a time. His clients tend to be entrepreneurs and CEOs in transition to the very top tier of their communities. He also works with artists and celebrities, heads of nations and philanthropists. Asked how he would describe his offering, David grins as he says, "I'm the Bentley of mentoring, a luxury brand for anyone on the brink of reaching the peak of their profession. I help them find that extra gear in their gearbox that they knew was there but didn't know how to access for maximum performance."

Given the way he describes himself and his work, it's no surprise that David loves his convertible dark blue Continental GT Convertible with a passion. Yet, he used to have little interest in cars. Then, about 10 years ago, he was drinking coffee in Berkeley Square, where he had his office. "I heard her first," he remembers. "It was a feminine growly purr and I turned round in time to see a streak of silver. It was the sexiest thing I'd ever seen in my life. It was the combination of power and subtlety in her that I fell in love with."

One of the core pillars of David's mentoring is helping people define and achieve their goals.

So, as one who claims to live by his own counsel, David immediately decided to add owning a Bentley to his own goals list and walked straight into the Jack Barclay showroom to find out about buying one.

"At the time there was no way I could afford a Bentley," says David. "But Philip the salesman was undeterred and said, 'You are already a Bentley driver, you just don't own one at the moment.' I felt instantly accepted into the Bentley family."

One of the exercises David gives his clients is to ask them to create their own life 'goals poster' and his own now included a Bentley. "I believe that everything on a goals poster comes true," says David. "Philip never harassed me but invited me to various events. Then one day I went to one and he saw I had all the paperwork for a new car on my front seat. He asked me how I'd feel about a Bentley for the same price as I was anyway intending to spend. He showed me a four-year-old silver Bentley Continental GT. It was beautiful and I bought it there and then."

David owned that car for three years before buying his current GT Convertible. "I think it has the most beautiful shape of anything on the road," he says. "It makes me enjoy everything I do involving driving more intensely. When I was 12, my sister had a French exchange student and I've gone on seeing her and her family ever since. They've become my adopted family and each year I drive the GTC to Lyon to visit them. It's a joy – I have my 'roof-down' playlist and there's simply nothing like driving through Burgundy with the top down, listening to great music."

David wants his clients to benefit from his mentoring across a broad spectrum. "I don't take on clients who are simply on a treadmill wanting to move remorselessly up the corporate ladder. I only take on people who want to reach the top in order to make a difference. That means they want their lives to be working on every level – professionally, personally, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually."

David begins his mentoring by inviting new clients to a three-day retreat at his Wimbledon Village home, to which he moved three years ago when he returned to London, his home town, after living in San Francisco. Behind electric gates, his house is a sleek, low, glass box, a surprise amongst the solid Edwardian mansions around it.

Inside, it is a tranquil oasis. There is no clutter, just a big, comfortable open-plan space with a huge leather sofa and an immaculate and ordered contemporary kitchen. Glass walls look onto his leafy, Zen decked garden. There is little to reveal David's tastes or interests except for several Buddhas and a miniature bonsai tree that are his sole concessions to decoration, along with a few framed photographs. David reads a Buddhist tract daily for inspiration but professes to be spiritual rather than overtly religious. He hopes his home gives the same impression: "My house is a sanctuary and I want my clients to feel this is a place in which they can hang up their holster, switch off their phone and put their feet up. It's beautifully quiet here, a serene environment in which we can unload the jigsaw pieces of their life so we can start fitting them together again."

David puts much of his success down to the fact he has made a point of being approachable, credible and trustworthy. "It's so important to be accessible and I'm very open and generous. If a top executive flies in from abroad to see me, I'll go and pick them up from the airport in the Bentley. They love that – everyone likes that personal contact of being met at the airport and we have downtime to chat in a lovely, comfortable car. It's a really good way of putting clients immediately at ease," says David.

His trustworthiness stems from his discretion. "The Chatham Rule applies here at all times," says David. "My clients know that nothing they say to me will be repeated. Likewise, I often choose to reveal things about myself that may shed light on their predicaments and I expect them to respect my privacy as much as I respect theirs."

His credibility is founded not just on an impressive list of enthusiastic testimonials from clients but on the fact that David himself has been a CEO and at the top of his own game for 25 years. He started out in private equity where he began studying entrepreneurs and successful executives, learning what made them tick. Realising, after 10 years, that he was stuck in a conventional, predictable rut and 'not living the life extraordinary' in a way he had dreamed of as a young man, he gave up his career to become an entrepreneur.

A rollercoaster ride followed: "I've had sublime successes, a few failures, and one or two near disasters, including a narrowly avoided



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personal bankruptcy,” says David. “It’s definitely been a lot tougher than my hardworking but solid life in finance. But I have learned so much more than I would have, had I continued on the path I was on. I have learned more about business, about people, about life. But most importantly, I have learned much, much more about who I really am.”

In 1997, following the collapse of his first marriage and £250,000 in debt, David founded Merryck & Co. that was to become, over 14 years, the world’s leading CEO mentoring company, with offices in the USA, Europe and Australia. “My clients know I speak their language,” says David. “There’s nothing about being a CEO that I don’t know. But it’s more than just business that has contributed to my arsenal of skills.” David’s first wife left him after 17 years, leaving him with a small son and daughter. “Raising two children, almost single-handedly for 17 years, taught me the gift of unconditional love and loyalty,” says David. “Facing near bankruptcy taught me how to remain calm and rational when hurricanes of anxiety and uncertainty swirled all around me. In the ten years it took me to claw my way back to zero, I learned the value of perseverance. The wisdom I’ve accumulated over the course of my life has enabled me to continue to lead a fulfilling, purposeful and fun life... no matter what.”

Three years ago, David took the next plunge and exited Merryck & Co. to focus on what he loved doing most, mentoring. “I realised that if I was going to walk my talk and practise what I preach, then it was time I became the best version of myself I could and that meant concentrating on being the very best mentor in the world.”





ABOVE

David C.M. Carter is known as The Mentor to a select list of CEOs, artists, entrepreneurs and celebrities. His methods will soon be open to a wider audience through his new book *Breakthrough*, already predicted to become a best seller.

Determined that the lessons he has learnt should make a difference, David has recently written a book, *Breakthrough*, which is already available internationally and in August it launches in America. It's a practical guide to improving your life with simple how-to tools in each chapter, allowing the reader access to his methods that have hitherto only been available to his prestigious clients. "I want to make a difference in the world and leave a legacy – sharing wisdom freely is part of that intention," explains David. The CEO of Penguin, the book's American publisher, is already predicting that *Breakthrough* will soar effortlessly into the prestigious New York Times Best Seller List and David is preparing a promotional tour of the States and planning a television series in 2014 to coincide with the book.

David is facing other exciting challenges. This month he's taken on a new high-profile fashion industry client and is looking for a flat in Knightsbridge, Chelsea or Kensington. "I've a couple of marriages behind me, my children have grown up and left home so for the first time I find myself to be a single empty-nester with no-one to look after. I don't need all this space any more," he says of his three-bedroomed

Wimbledon Village home. While he loves the peace and community feel of Wimbledon Village, he is looking forward to being in a more central and convenient location for his clients, hobbies and friends. "It's important I find somewhere with the same kind of serene atmosphere where I can do my retreats," he says. "And of course, somewhere where it's not difficult to park!"

It's a beautiful Saturday morning and David is going to drive through Richmond Park en route to taking his daughter, who works for Harrods as a catering consultant, out for lunch at Borough Market. "I love discovering new restaurants," says David happily, climbing into his Bentley. I ask how he would sum up in one sentence why someone already successful needs a mentor. Without hesitating he says, "I teach the difference between being successful and being significant," and with that his gates open, his roof comes down, the 'roof-down' playlist starts up and his Bentley glides away into the sunshine **B**

Charlotte Metcalf is a documentary film-maker, writer and author of 'Walking Away', about her time making films in Africa.